

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

IN THE CLAIMS

What we claim is:

1. (Currently Amended) A chemically modified double stranded short interfering ribonucleic acid (siNA) (siRNA) molecule comprising a sense strand and an antisense strand ~~that inhibits replication of a hepatitis C virus (HCV), wherein one of the strands of said double stranded siNA molecule is an antisense strand which comprises a nucleotide sequence that is complementary to the nucleotide sequence of an HCV RNA or a portion thereof and the other strand is a sense strand which comprises a nucleotide sequence that is complementary to the nucleotide sequence of the antisense strand, and wherein a majority of the pyrimidine nucleotides present in said double stranded siNA molecule comprises a sugar modification, wherein:~~
 - a) each strand of said siRNA molecule is about 18 to about 27 nucleotides in length;
 - b) the antisense strand of said siRNA molecule comprises about 18 to about 27 nucleotides that are complementary to HCV RNA corresponding to SEQ ID NO: 1706 and are also complementary to the sense strand;
 - c) the sense strand of the siRNA molecule comprises a portion of the HCV RNA nucleotide sequence of about 18 to about 27 nucleotides; and
 - d) the siRNA molecule comprises at least one 2'-O-methyl or 2'-deoxy-2'-fluoro nucleotide.
2. (Canceled)
3. (Canceled)
4. (Canceled)

5. (Currently Amended) The ~~siNA~~ siRNA molecule of claim 1, wherein the ~~siNA~~ siRNA molecule comprises one or more ribonucleotides.
6. (Canceled)
7. (Canceled)
8. (Canceled)
9. (Canceled)
10. (Canceled)
11. (Canceled)
12. (Canceled)
13. (Canceled)
14. (Canceled)
15. (Currently Amended) The ~~siNA~~ siRNA molecule of claim 1, wherein ~~any~~ one or more pyrimidine nucleotides present in the sense strand are 2'-deoxy-2'-fluoro pyrimidine nucleotides ~~and wherein any purine nucleotides present in the sense region are 2'-deoxy purine nucleotides.~~
16. (Currently Amended) The ~~siNA~~ siRNA molecule of claim 1, wherein the sense strand ~~comprises a 3'-end and a 5'-end, and wherein~~ includes a terminal cap moiety ~~is present at the a 5'-end, the a 3'-end, or both of the 5' and 3' ends of the sense strand.~~
17. (Currently Amended) The ~~siNA~~ siRNA molecule of claim 16, wherein said terminal cap moiety is an inverted deoxy abasic moiety.
18. (Currently Amended) The ~~siNA~~ siRNA molecule of claim 1, wherein ~~the antisense strand comprises~~ one or more pyrimidine nucleotides present in said antisense strand are 2'-deoxy-2'-fluoro pyrimidine nucleotides and ~~one or more 2'-O-methyl purine nucleotides.~~
19. (Canceled)

20. (Currently Amended) The ~~siNA~~ siRNA molecule of claim 1, wherein the antisense strand comprises a terminal phosphorothioate internucleotide linkage at the 3' end of said antisense strand.
21. (Canceled)
22. (Canceled)
23. (Canceled)
24. (Canceled)
25. (Canceled)
26. (Canceled)
27. (Canceled)
28. (Canceled)
29. (Currently Amended) The ~~siNA~~ siRNA molecule of claim 1, wherein ~~the 5' end~~ of the antisense strand ~~optionally~~ includes a terminal phosphate group.
30. (Canceled)
31. (Canceled)
32. (Currently Amended) A ~~pharmaceutical~~ composition comprising the ~~siNA~~ siRNA molecule of claim 1 in ~~[[an]]~~ a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier or diluent.
33. (Canceled)
34. (Canceled)
35. (Canceled)
36. (New) The siRNA molecule of claim 1, wherein one or more pyrimidine nucleotides in the sense strand are 2'-O-methyl pyrimidine nucleotides.
37. (New) The siRNA molecule of claim 1, wherein one or more purine nucleotides in the sense strand are 2'-deoxy purine nucleotides.

38. (New) The siRNA molecule of claim 1, wherein one or more purine nucleotides present in said antisense strand are 2'-O-methyl purine nucleotides.
39. (New) The siRNA molecule of claim 1, wherein one or more purine nucleotides present in said antisense strand comprise 2'-deoxy-purine nucleotides.